1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

earthenware pot (*obu*) the cooked taro is transferred to smaller pots, wooden bowls (*teva*), or coco-nut shells, in which it is served.

Food is placed in front of the principal people present, and the others soon group themselves round the various dishes. There is none but a tacit invitation, simply a jerk of the head. The meal goes on for the most part in silence—that is, in respect of conversation, though not always in respect of mastication and swallowing. The only table utensils are coco-nut spoons (*age*), in the form of little boat-shaped scoops, and three- or four-pronged forks (*sagi*) made of bone or wood. The latter, however, are said to be old men's implements. It was suggested that they were needed because of the clumsiness of an old man's fingers, but the fact is that there is something honorific about them. A young man would not feel at home with a *sagi*; he would be, in a manner, exceeding his rights.

Nearly all Orokaiva cooking is done in earthenware pots. They are even carried on expeditions. But on emergency there is the method of cooking with hot stones. The food is placed on a layer of leaves upon the hot stones; more leaves and more hot stones are laid on top, and the food slowly bakes. The method of cooking in a pit, with heated stones below and above is known, but I have never seen it put into practice. It is alluded to in some of the legends and is presumably an old fashion. The boiling of water by heated stones is used in fumigation. The medicines are placed together with water in a wooden dish (*teva*), and when the heated stones are thrown in, the steam rises and the sick man stoops over it to be fumigated.

Salt. The native shows the usual craving for salt, so that among the inlanders it is useful pay for carriers. Visiting the coast, these inlanders will even take calabashes and bring them home full of sea-water. The only means of obtaining it locally is by burning certain leaves and the husks of coco-nut or *Tauga* nuts. Over a layer of dry wood are set a number of large pottery fragments, and over these again are piled the leaves and husks. Ignited, the pile smokes abundantly, and when it has burnt away leaves a residue of

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

ash in the pottery fragments. For actual use the ash, which has a salty taste, is placed in a half coco-nut shell and watered; and the salty water percolates through the eye-hole of the coco-nut into the cooking-pot.

Stimulants

The habit of betel-chewing is universal among men, women, and even young children. There can be no question that betel, a mild and comparatively harmless stimulant, does much to make the native's life pleasanter, especially by reason of the good-fellowship which is the best argument for all intoxicants. Areca or betel palms grow in every village. The betel pepper (*Piper betle*) called *Hingi* grows wild in the bush and is transplanted into villages and gardens. A superior cultivated kind is called *Hingi petani*. Legends of the origin or discovery of the areca palm and the betel pepper have been recounted elsewhere.[1]

Lime (*O-nasal*) is made by burning shell-fish from the sea or rivers. A small tower or pyre about 3 feet square and 3 feet 6 inches high is made of layers of dry sago branches laid criss-cross, and on each layer are set a number of shells. The pyre is lit from above in order to prevent premature collapse. It burns and cools rapidly, 'like paper'. The shells, which retain their shape, are transferred by improvised tongs to a sheet of banana leaf, which by being passed once or twice through the flames has become pliable. The shells are gently kneaded with mutterings of *ere ere!* 'Get up, hurry up!', which are meant to expedite the pulverizing process, and are cautiously sprinkled with water. Then the banana leaf is folded and left by a fire, presumably to hasten the slaking. If all this has been done carefully, the result will be a very fine soft powder.

The lime-pot (*O-kigi*) is a calabash with a stopper of closely woven strands of creeper. A somewhat more pretentious lime-pot, called *kananga*, is furnished with a shell mouthpiece set in black native beeswax, and encrusted with gems of scarlet seed and white shell fragments. The spatula (*O-ta*) is commonly of black wood. The point is thrust into

[1] *Orokaiva Magic*, p. 123.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

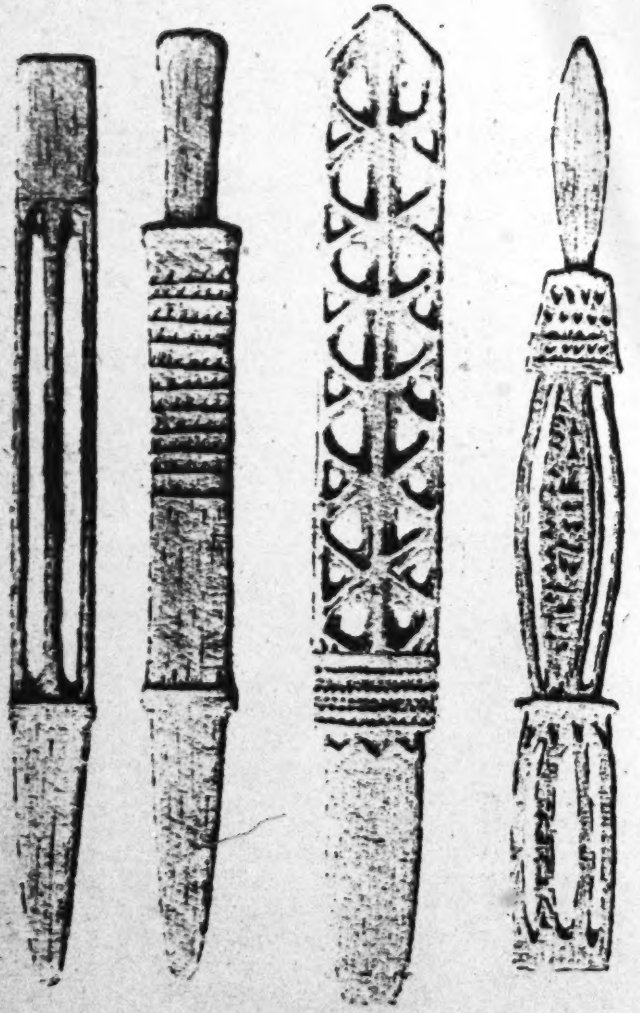
the mouth of the lime-pot and then into the mouth of the chewer, who sucks off the thin coating of lime powder. Usually the spatula is very indifferently carved, for the Orokaiva is no wood-carver; the few examples illustrated are of somewhat exceptional merit (Plate XIII). With the large lime-pot (*kananga*) there usually goes a spatula of bone, and the two together may constitute an *otobu* or ceremonial gift made at initiation, though in use they are both appropriate to old age, and a youth or person of small consequence would not have the effrontery to use them. The old man makes a somewhat ostentatious rattling of the bone spatula against the opening of the *kananga*.

Tobacco is a late introduction in the Northern Division, having preceded the European by hardly more than a generation. The evidence clearly indicates that the mountaineers behind Kokoda first brought it to the Orokaiva, and that, travelling from the neighbourhood of Kokoda, it had not reached the Mambare or the lower Kumusi by the time MacGregor first visited these rivers.[1] Its original names are said to have been *orokaiva* (or *kaiva*) and *kuku*, the last being used before the whites brought their trade tobacco, which is now known throughout the Territory as *kuku*. The name *orokaiva* has already been discussed, but with regard to the others, *kaiva* and *kuku*, it may be worth while drawing attention to the singular coincidence that the two words are joined together in the Gulf Division and indicate a masked figure, *Kaivakuku*, and that in the Northern Division they are alternative names for the same substance, native tobacco.

Several other names, more or less local, are used, viz. *Hajojo* and *Tonaki* (derived from the resemblance of the tobacco leaf to those of the *Hajojo* and *Tonaki* trees); *Masati*, which is said to be the same word as *masa*, 'stink'; and *soka*, which bears a suspicious resemblance to the name *sokowa*, commonly used for tobacco west of the Fly river, and may have been introduced by the early Kiwai police. Several varieties are distinguished. The leaf is simply sun-dried, and is smoked either in the well-known bamboo tube (*poru*) or else rolled with some leaf or other into a cigarette.

[1] *Annual Report*, 1893, pp. 31, 34.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23



276
445
531

O-ta or Lime Spatulae

PLATE XIII

[facing p 66]

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

323
412
142

(*a*) Beating Clay for Pottery

415
142

(*b*) Making Wooden Dishes, *Tava*

PLATE XVII [Facing p. 78]

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

The singing is called sometimes *kasamba*, sometimes *tinogu*: the second word, like the first, is one of the new Taro vocabulary, presumably belonging to the Binandele dialect, but used nowadays by Taro men among the Aiga, for instance, in preference to their own word *peungu*. As so often with native songs, the meaning is very obscure, even to the singers; and sometimes the theme, when it is discovered, appears somewhat beside the mark. Mr. Elder writes, regarding the Taro songs, 'some of them had little or nothing to do with taro. One for instance ran, "I'm a duck, I'm a duck, a jamb in the river, I'm a duck"'. And he not ineptly adds, 'I fancy the Taro worshipper who composed that song must secretly have been an unbeliever, and a bit of a humorist'. But very commonly the song consists of a series of apostrophes to the taro, a kind of salutation or hailing of it by name, with the cry of welcome, '*Oroda!*' which is a countersign of the cult. Thus one may hear, '*Oroda Kaiva, oroda Porove, Ovivi!*' &c., in endless musical repetition; or '*Ba de aja borejo*', 'Mother taro increase', and similar phrases, little canticles in which praise, exhortation, and prayer are combined. Very often it is futile to search too deeply for a meaning, because the words of the song have been learned by rote, and so confused in the course of transmission that they have become little better than gibberish. But whatever their meaning or lack of it, the songs are understood to contribute in some way to the growth of the taro; and some informants have declared that the Taro spirits heard them and responded.

As the Taro men have adopted a new name for the feast—*kasamba* instead of the old-fashioned *pona*—so they have introduced certain new formalities into the conduct of the feast. Taro must be cut up into small lumps; when cooked it must be ranged in a row of boat-shaped wooden dishes *teo*, or the large platters made of canoe-board and called *betaia*; from the earthenware cooking-pot it must be transferred to the wooden dish by means of the

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

wooden fork or prong called *orai*; the really correct implement for peeling it before cooking is the black oyster-shell *yowa*. These very trivial points are accorded a good deal of importance, because, one and all, they have been impressed upon the Taro men by the spirits. One man, for instance, met his deceased *imbo*, or maternal uncle, in a dream, and was directed to make 'forks' from a certain kind of tree named *aima*. The forks, of which there was now a large supply in the village, were merely pointed pieces of wood, painted a dull red with clay; but they appeared to possess a sanctity out of all proportion to their appearance or utility. It would be impossible to tell how often forks, wooden dishes, platters, and so forth have been bestowed upon various dreamers by the spirits of the taro or the spirits of the dead.

It has been said already that dancing is not a marked feature of the Taro cult, although the Orokaiva have developed the dance to an admirable degree of perfection in their older ceremonies. Hitherto the devotees of the cult have been only too ready to find satisfaction in the absurd and sometimes hideous antics which are presently to be described. Some sects perform a stationary and others a sort of processional dance, both of which compare very unfavourably with the graceful and animated ballet which is the best product of Orokaiva art. There are, however, certain dances belonging to minor sects which seem to conform to the older style. Buninia himself originated such a dance, which has already been mentioned (p. 13). Yavevi, a disciple of the Manau cult, used to perform with his followers one of unusual complexity. The *Hohora*, or 'Rooster', men reproduced in a nature dance certain characteristic actions of the domestic cock, and theirs was one of the prettiest performances it has been my good fortune to see among Orokaiva dancers. But it is still true that the dance is, as yet, only a minor and ill-developed feature of the cult. The Taro men prefer as a rule to sit down as they sing. A *tinogu* or *kasamba* may be merely impromptu, when it is per-